

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Case File No.: A-31764 (2333)

AK-040-04-EA-018

Applicant: Department of the Navy, Department of Defense

Type of Action: Withdrawal Revocation/Restoration

Location: Seward Meridian, Alaska, within:
T. 96 S., R. 193 W.; T. 96 S., R. 194 W.; T. 96 S., R. 195 W.; T. 97 S.,
R. 195 W.; T. 96 S., R. 196 W.; T. 97 S., R. 196 W.

Prepared By: Rodney Huffman
Realty Specialist

Preparing Office: Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage Field Office
6881 Abbott Loop Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2599

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background:

Public Law 107-239 of January 23, 2002, ratified the “Agreement concerning the Conveyance of Property at the Adak Naval Complex, Adak, Alaska,” between the Aleut Corporation, the Department of Interior, and the Department of the Navy. The agreement provided for disposition of the land on Adak Island withdrawn for use by the Navy under Public Land Order (PLO) 1949. Under the agreement an area identified as Parcel 1 would be conveyed directly to the Aleut Corporation. Parcel 1 contains all the areas developed on the island by the Navy. Areas identified as Parcel 2 and 3 do not contain any improvements and will not be conveyed to the Aleut Corporation. Therefore, with the revocation of the withdrawal, the land will return to management by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. An area identified as Parcel 4 is to be retained by the Navy, because it is unsuitable for transfer at this time. This Environmental Assessment addresses only Parcels 2 and 3.

B. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

The Navy has requested relinquishment of a portion of a withdrawal, authorized by PLO 1949 dated August 19, 1959. PLO 1949 withdrew a portion of Adak Island, which the Navy operated as the Naval Air Facility (NAF), Adak. Pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, Public Law 101-510 as amended, NAF Adak was identified for closure on July 13, 1995. The Navy closed NAF Adak on March 31, 1997.

By Executive Order 1733, all of Adak Island was withdrawn as part of the Aleutian Islands Reserve on March 3, 1913. This area was later incorporated into the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge by § 303 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980. Therefore, revocation of a portion of the withdrawal, will return the land to the management of the USF&WS for inclusion in the refuge system.

C. Conformance With Land Use Plan:

No land use plan exists for this area. However, the environmental analysis assesses the impacts of the Proposed Action and provides a basis for a decision on the proposal [43 CFR 1610.8 (b) (1)].

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action is to partially revoke PLO 1949 and to restore land to the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Parcels of land are located on Adak

Island, Alaska, and are described as Seward Meridian, Alaska:

T. 96 S., R. 193 W., Secs. 19 and 20; and Secs. 29 to 32, inclusive.

T. 96 S., R. 194 W., Sec. 13; Sec. 20, E $\frac{1}{2}$; Secs. 21 to 28, inclusive; Sec. 29, E $\frac{1}{2}$; Secs. 31 to 36, inclusive.

T. 96 S., R. 195 W., Sec. 19, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$; Sec. 20, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$; Sec. 28, W $\frac{1}{2}$; Sec. 29, 30, and 31; Sec. 32, N $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$; Sec. 33, NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

T. 97 S., R. 195 W., Secs. 2 to 6, inclusive; that part of Secs. 7 to 11, inclusive, North of Latitude 51° 47' 15" N.

T. 96 S., R. 196 W., Sec. 24, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$; Sec. 25, E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$; Sec. 36, E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$.

T. 97 S., R. 196 W., Secs. 1 to 6, inclusive; that part of Secs. 7 to 12, inclusive, North of Latitude 51° 47' 15" N. (see attached map).

B. No Action Alternative:

The No Action Alternative is to continue the withdrawal.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Critical Elements:

The following critical elements of the human environment were not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action:

Air Quality

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Cultural Resources

Environmental Justice

Farm Lands (prime or unique)

Floodplains

Invasive, Non-native Species

Native American Religious Concerns

Water Quality Surface/Ground

Wetlands/Riparian Zones

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Wilderness

1. Subsistence:

The Proposed Action is administrative in nature and does not alter the status of the lands regarding the Federal Subsistence authority.

2. Threatened or Endangered Species:

The endangered Aleutian shield fern (*Polystichum aleuticum*) is presently known to occur only on a small area on the upper slopes of Mount Reed, within the Adak Naval withdrawal. Because of its extreme rarity, the Aleutian shield fern was listed as endangered in 1988 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The species was

originally described from collections made on Atka Island in 1932, but has not been found on Atka since.

3. Wastes, Hazardous or Solid:

Parcel 2, an area around Mt Reed, has no documented hazmat sites.

Parcel 3 has no oil or hazardous substance sites. Parcel 3 does have a number of historic Ordnance and Explosives/Unexploded Ordnance (OE/UXO) sites within it. The majority of the OE/UXO sites were cleared, having found nothing. There was some debris and a few UXO's found on a few of the OE/UXO sites; all but one of these sites were then cleared. One of the sites (BC-01) required further investigation because some fragments were found outside the documented range fan. BC-01 was a 155mm Howitzer battery's impact range during part of WWII, and some pieces of shell fragments were found outside the designated impact area/range fan (no actual UXO). BC-01 has since been re-investigated and cleared. The Naval Ordnance Safety and Security Office and the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board have concurred that all of the OE/UXO sites within parcels 2 and 3 have been adequately cleared

The Navy has inventoried, assessed and rehabilitated all identified sites within Parcels 2 and 3. The Navy, EPA, and ADEC signed a Record of Decision which found the parcels suitable for transfer with implementation of certain institutional controls. Essentially, No Further Action Required status has been declared by the Responsible Party and regulatory agencies.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action:

There are no impacts from the Proposed Action. The proposed partial revocation of PLO 1949 is administrative in nature and would have no effect on the human environment. The revocation of PLO 1949 will change management from the Department of the Navy to the USF&WS.

B. Impacts of the No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to the human environment.

C. Residual and Cumulative Impacts:

No residual or cumulative impacts will occur from this action.

D. Mitigation:

No mitigating measures are necessary since this action does not impact the environment.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. List of Preparers:

Larry Beck - Hazardous Materials Specialist
Rodney Huffman - Realty Specialist
Donna Redding - Archaeologist
Jeff Denton - Subsistence Coordinator
Bruce Seppi - Wildlife Biologist